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ABSTRACT

The office of institutional research at West Virginia University, an intergral part of the university's office of planning, annually produces a fact book called "Statistical Profiles of West Virginia University." The book is used as a source of information for planning, and contains information on six topics: the university's mission; programs; faculty and staff; sources of financial support; and facilities. A national study was undertaken to learn more about fact book production and use, or lack of them, in other institutions. Specifically, the intent was to investigate reasons for not producing such a fact book, and also to examine costs, manpower needs, distribution, uses of the information, production problems, and the content of the publications that are produced. The results of this survey are presented in detail. (MSE)

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# 'Fact Books' - A Tool for Intra-Institutional Communication

Paper Presented

at

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## INTRODUCTION

At West Virginia University (WVU) the charge to the Office of Planning is "to develop, implement, and coordinate the execution of the planning process" (Haas, 1976). To help meet this responsibility, three major functions have developed which define the activities of the Planning Office. These functions are:

(1) To develop planning tools;

(2) To see that planning gets done; and

(3) To see that planning gets done well (a quality control function).

As an integral part of the Office of Planning at WVU, the Office of Institutional Research is involved in all phases of the planning process. A major responsibility of the Office of Institutional Research is the annual publication of several planning tools--in particular, Statistical Profiles of West Virginia University. The information included in this fact book is a compendium of data which is designed to give the reader an overview of the University during the past academic year. In some instances, data are presented for the most recent five-year period to give the user some insight into trends that may have developed which would help anticipate future needs. The continuing and growing use of this information has caused the production of Statistical Profiles of West Virginia University to become a high priority in the Office of Institutional Research each year.

Since its first publication in 1971, the fact book has been expanded to include information concerning six areas of the Institution. These six areas are:

(1) Scope of the University's Mission;

(2) Programs;

(3) Faculty and Staff;

(4) Student Body;

(5) Sources of Financial Support; and

(6) Facilities.

In addition, this same information is collected and presented for Potomac State College, a junior college of West Virginia University.

Over the years, efforts have been made to improve the overall comprehensiveness of the material presented and the format of its presentation. One of these efforts has been a national study which was conducted in the hope of gaining additional insights about fact book production and its use in institutions of higher education. Specifically, the purposes of this study were:

(1) To investigate reasons that institutions do not produce fact books; and

(2) To examine costs, manpower needs, distribution, uses of the information, production problems, and the content of the fact books produced by colleges and universities.

## METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

### Sample

The sample examined in this study was selected from institutions represented in the 1976-77 Association for Institutional Research (AIR) Directory. The sample consisted of 600 institutions in the United States and Canada. From these 600 institutuions, there were 311 useable responses returned (52%). Illustrated in Table I is a breakdown of the useable responses by type of institution (highest degree awarded) and whether or not these schools produce a fact book.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION - AND PRODUCTION OR NON-PRODUCTION OF A FACT BOOK

| | Associate Degree | Bachelor Degree | Master Degree | Doctorate Degree | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do Produce a Fact Book | 27 (40%) | 18 (38%) | 33 (40%) | 67 (48%) | 145 (47%) |
| Do Not Produce a Fact Book | 40 (60%) | 29 (62%) | 49 (60%) | 48 (52%) | 166 (53%) |
| TOTAL | 67 | 47 | 82 | 115 | 311 |

### Instrument

The data used in this study were collected by means of a questionnaire developed by the investigators and reviewed by several provosts at WVU (Attachment A). The questionnaire was developed with the intent of allowing the respondents to answer questions quickly while at the same time providing the investigators with the needed information.

The questionnaire was developed to solicitate information concerning:

(1) Reasons the institution did not produce a fact book; and

(2) Costs, manpower needs, distribution, uses of the information, and production problems of the institution that did produce a fact book.

In addition, those institutions that did produce a fact book were asked to enclose a copy of their latest edition with the completed questionnaire.

Analysis/Methodology

The returned questionnaires were examined and those not completed or not answered in an acceptable format were eliminated. The format of the questionnaire was such that responses could be taken directly from the questionnaire for analysis, with the exception of question six. A checklist was devised for question six in order to categorize the various responses for analysis. This checklist was developed after reviewing the responses and determining those most often listed. The data were then coded and keypunched.

In order to analyze the content of the received fact books, a checklist was developed to establish guidelines for examining the presence of specific types of information. This checklist was developed in accordance with information found in the fact book produced at WVU. The returned fact books were then reviewed as to whether the specific items on the checklist were included. This data were then coded and keypunched.

The predominant mode for the analysis was the use of frequency distributions and percentages, and where appropriate, means were calculated. The Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS) package was used to analyze the data.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Institutions that do not Produce a Fact Book

Of the 311 responses, 166 indicated that their institutions did not produce a fact book. (Refer to Table I for breakdown of these respondents by type of institution.) These respondents were requested to indicate reasons for not producing a fact book by checking the appropriate items as indicated on the questionnaire.

Illustrated in Table II are the reasons for not producing a fact book and the percentage of each type institution which indicated each of the reasons. Most institutions checked several reasons.

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION - REASONS FOR NOT PRODUCING A FACT BOOK

| Reasons for not Producing a Fact Book | Associate Degree (N=40) | Bachelor Degree (N=29) | Master Degree (N=49) | Doctorate Degree (N=48) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of Funds | 27% | 21% | 20% | 21% |
| Lack of Manpower | 45% | 45% | 49% | 50% |
| No Perceived Need | 40% | 48% | 39% | 46% |
| Information not Easily Obtained | 7% | 10% | 8% | 15% |
| Lack of Time | 5% | 3% | 2% | 4% |
| Other | 13% | 14% | 35% | 13% |

As can be seen, different institutional types appear to have similar reasons for not producing a fact book. Primarily, fact books were not produced because of a "lack of manpower" and secondly because of "no perceived need." "Lack of funds" was the third most frequent reason indicated

The major exception to the consistency of responses across all types of institutions to this item was that of master degree granting institutions in the category "Other." Thirty-five percent of these colleges and universities indicated reasons other than those listed for not producing a fact book. The majority of these institutions indicated that individual reports, newsletters, etc., were distributed throughout the year in place of a single publication.

A higher percentage of doctoral granting institutions indicated that "the information was not easily obtained" than did the other types of institutions. This may be a function of the complexity of data bases often required at large institutions.

Institutions that do Produce a Fact Book

As illustrated in Table I (p. 3), 145 of the 311 respondents periodically produce some type of fact book. As can be seen, the percentage of doctoral granting institutions producing a fact book was 18 to 20 percent higher than that of the other types of institutions. This could reflect increasing state and federal reporting requirements of institutions with federal grants. Of the 145 institutions that reported producing fact books, 96 returned copies with the questionnaire.

From the initial examination of the fact books received from the responding institutions, it was evident that a more detailed definition of what constituted a fact book was needed. Fact books received ranged from pocket-sized pamphlets to detailed bound books. In the analysis of production costs, distribution, uses, and problems encountered in the production of the fact book, all responses were included regardless of the types of fact book. For the analysis of the content, however, the fact books were divided into two groups:

(1) Pamphlet/pocket-sized publications; and

(2) Bound books.

Production Costs (Dollars and Manpower Hours)

Institutional costs, both dollars and manpower hours, varied greatly by the type of information presented and the format used for the publication (pamphlet or bound book). In addition, the size of the institution may affect the production costs as the larger and more complex the institution the larger the bound-type fact book tends to be. The average annual publishing cost to the responding institutions was $594 with a standard deviation of 988. The average number of professional hours dedicated to the production of the fact book for the 145 responding institutions was 118 hours with a standard deviation of 280. Non-professional (i.e., clerical and secretarial) hours per institution averaged 95 hours with a standard deviation of 173 needed for fact book production.

Distribution of the Fact Books

All institutions which produce fact books were asked to indicate what groups, both internally and externally, are provided automatically with fact books. The percentages by type of institution which provide fact books automatically to various groups are presented in Table III.

From Table III it is apparent that nearly all central administrators and deans are automatically supplied with copies of their school's fact book. Automatic distribution to chairpersons varied within the types of institutions with only 44% of the bachelor granting institutions including chairpersons in this category. Automatic distribution to faculty may be a function of the size of the institution, as only 16% of the doctoral granting institutions

responded in this category. Approximately one-third of the responding institutions (with the exception of the master degree granting institutions) responded to the "Other" category. The institutions responding in this category predominantly included organizations or committees unique to their particular institution.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION - GROUPS TO WHICH THE FACT BOOKS ARE AUTOMATICALLY SUPPLIED

| Groups | Associate Degree (N=40) | Bachelor Degree (N=29) | Master Degree (N=49) | Doctorate Degree (N=48) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Central Administrators | 96% | 94% | 94% | 99% |
| Deans | 93% | 89% | 91% | 88% |
| Chairpersons | 78% | 44% | 76% | 63% |
| Faculty | 26% | 33% | 24% | 16% |
| Student Representatives | 7% | 22% | 9% | 6% |
| State Agencies | 22% | 17% | 9% | 21% |
| Federal Agencies | 4% | 11% | 3% | 6% |
| Private Agencies | 4% | - | 3% | 9% |
| Trustees | 11% | 44% | 9% | 10% |
| News Media | 7% | - | - | 9% |
| Other Institutions | - | - | 3% | 4% |
| Other | 30% | 33% | 18% | 36% |

In addition to those groups of people that automatically receive a fact book, the respondents were asked to indicate those groups which are given a fact book upon request. Analyses of the responses to this question were not done, as most institutions indicated that any person or group of persons could receive a fact book upon request.

## Uses of the Fact Book Information

The next type of data requested from those institutions surveyed, dealt with the way fact book information was used. As described above, a checklist was developed to aid in categorizing the responses. In Table IV, the uses are listed with the respective percentages of responses for each type institution. As can be seen, the responses were somewhat consistent for all types of institutions.

For all institutions, the fact book is used most often as a resource document. An exception to this was the 50% of the bachelor degree granting institutions used it for planning. Only about 25% of the other type institutions used the fact book as a planning tool. It should be remembered that all types of fact books are included in this analysis, and uses could be limited by the detail and type of information presented in each fact book.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION - USES OF FACT BOOKS

| Use | Associate Degree (N=40) | Bachelor Degree (N=29) | Master Degree (N=49) | Doctorate Degree (N=48) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| General Information | 26% | 22% | 15% | 85% |
| Reference Source | 22% | 44% | 36% | 40% |
| Planning | 26% | 50% | 27% | 25% |
| Grants and Contracts | 7% | - | 6% | 7% |
| Budget | 15% | 6% | 6% | 7% |
| Recruitment | - | 6% | - | 12% |
| Public Relations | 11% | 6% | 6% | 18% |
| Evaluation Studies | 4% | - | 21% | 9% |
| Resource Document | 52% | 50% | 45% | 40% |
| Management Decision Making | 11% | 11% | 18% | 16% |
| Other | 15% | 22% | 27% | 13% |

Problems Encountered in Producing a Fact Book

The next question on the survey dealt with problems encountered in producing a fact book. Those surveyed were asked to rank six potential problems from most difficult to least difficult. Responses to this question varied from a ranking to a simple checking of problems encountered. It was, therefore, nearly impossible to gain insights into the problems of most concern to the respondents.

Examination of the results did reveal, however, that the most common problems encountered were lack of funds for publication costs and the availability of printing facilities. This was found to be true for all types of institutions.

Content Analysis

As outlined above, the content of each fact book was examined with respect to a checklist. This checklist consisted of the types of information which are found in the WVU fact book. In addition, those fact books received from the survey respondents were quickly reviewed for types of information consistently appearing that are not included in the WVU fact book. This resulted in a checklist of 35 items. (It is not implied that this checklist comprised all items which should be included in a fact book. Rather, it is an inventory of items which consistently seem to appear in those fact books examined.) This checklist then served as a guide to summarize the content areas of each publication. This analysis was done for both types of fact books. No attempt was made to analyze the quality of the information or the detail in which the information was presented.

Illustrated in Tables V and VI (bound books and pamphlet/pocket-sized, respectively) are the checklists of content area with percentages of institutions by type which included the information in their publication. As Tables V and VI are rather extensive, no attempt has been made to describe their contents in the narrative. It appears, however, that the emphasis of most

fact books is on student and faculty-related information. No one institutional type included all types of information on the checklist in their fact books; however, it did not appear from the data that the type of information presented was related to an institutional type.

TABLE V
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION -
CONTENT OF FACT BOOKS-BOUND BOOKS

| | Associate Degree (N=11) | Bachelor Degree (N=10) | Master Degree (N=13) | Doctorate Degree (N=34) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Headcount | 82% | 100% | 100% | 97% |
| Full Time Equated | 55% | 80% | 75% | 50% |
| Enrollment by Sex | 73% | 90% | 92% | 74% |
| Geographic Distribution | 73% | 80% | 85% | 79% |
| Enrollment by History | 55% | 70% | 92% | 67% |
| Enrollment Projections | 36% | 0% | 23% | 26% |
| Enrollment by Race | 55% | 10% | 69% | 44% |
| ACT/SAT Scores | 0% | 30% | 46% | 41% |
| Student Credit Hours | 55% | 80% | 62% | 62% |
| Grade Point Average | 18% | 20% | 31% | 38% |
| Financial Aid Information | 27% | 30% | 38% | 50% |
| Non-Resident Count | 64% | 80% | 77% | 62% |
| Student Characteristics | 73% | 20% | 31% | 38% |
| College Choice Factors | 18% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Degrees Awarded | 55% | 80% | 92% | 85% |
| Degree History | 36% | 70% | 69% | 71% |
| Faculty Distribution | 36% | 60% | 62% | 65% |
| Faculty by Rank | 27% | 90% | 69% | 68% |
| Faculty by Sex | 45% | 90% | 62% | 32% |
| Faculty by Race | 36% | 20% | 23% | 21% |
| Faculty Salaries (mean) | 9% | 60% | 38% | 35% |
| Student/Teacher Ratio | 27% | 80% | 8% | 32% |
| Listing of Land Holdings | 18% | 0% | 31% | 32% |
| Building Inventory | 27% | 50% | 62% | 53% |
| Space Utilization | 36% | 50% | 31% | 44% |
| Library Statistics | 18% | 40% | 54% | 53% |
| Housing Statistics | 0% | 50% | 62% | 38% |
| Map of Campus | 36% | 0% | 23% | 26% |
| Budget Allocations | 27% | 50% | 54% | 68% |
| Sources of Support | 36% | 30% | 54% | 59% |
| Tuition/Fees | 27% | 30% | 38% | 53% |
| History/Profile of Institution | 36% | 60% | 38% | 50% |
| Type of Institution | 36% | 40% | 23% | 41% |
| Institution's Accreditations | 0% | 20% | 38% | 26% |
| Alumni Distribution | 9% | 10% | 8% | 21% |

TABLE VI
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION -
CONTENT OF FACT BOOKS-PAMPHLET/POCKET SIZE

| | Associate Degree (N=6) | Bachelor Degree (N=1) | Master Degree (N=3) | Doctorate Degree (N=18) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Headcount | 100% | 100% | 100% | 83% |
| Full Time Equated | 50% | 100% | 33% | 22% |
| Enrollment by Sex | 33% | 100% | 67% | 44% |
| Geographic Distribution | 33% | 0% | 100% | 50% |
| Enrollment by History | 50% | 100% | 33% | 39% |
| Enrollment Projections | 0% | 0% | 33% | 6% |
| Enrollment by Race | 33% | 0% | 67% | 28% |
| ACT/SAT Scores | 0% | 0% | 33% | 11% |
| Student Credit Hours | 17% | 100% | 0% | 6% |
| Grade Point Average | 0% | 0% | 0% | 6% |
| Financial Aid Information | 33% | 100% | 67% | 50% |
| Non-Resident Count | 17% | 100% | 0% | 44% |
| Student Characteristics | 17% | 0% | 67% | 6% |
| College Choice Factors | 0% | 0% | 33% | 0% |
| Degrees Awarded | 17% | 100% | 33% | 67% |
| Degree History | 17% | 0% | 0% | 6% |
| Faculty Distribution | 17% | 100% | 33% | 33% |
| Faculty by Rank | 17% | 100% | 33% | 17% |
| Faculty by Sex | 0% | 100% | 33% | 6% |
| Faculty by Race | 17% | 0% | 33% | 6% |
| Faculty Salaries (mean) | 0% | 100% | 33% | 11% |
| Student/Teacher Ratio | 50% | 100% | 67% | 28% |
| Listing of Land Holdings | 0% | 0% | 0% | 67% |
| Building Inventory | 33% | 0% | 33% | 33% |
| Space Utilization | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Library Statistics | 50% | 0% | 67% | 78% |
| Housing Statistics | 0% | 0% | 0% | 44% |
| Map of Campus | 33% | 0% | 33% | 17% |
| Budget Allocations | 50% | 0% | 67% | 67% |
| Sources of Support | 67% | 0% | 67% | 56% |
| Tuition/Fees | 33% | 0% | 67% | 76% |
| History/Profile of Institution | 50% | 0% | 100% | 67% |
| Type of Institution | 50% | 0% | 67% | 56% |
| Institution's Accreditations | 0% | 0% | 67% | 18% |
| Alumni Distribution | 17% | 0% | 67% | 61% |

## CONCLUSIONS

At WVU a large amount of resources is dedicated to the production of a fact book each year. As the information in the fact book is used as common ground by deans, directors, and the central administration in annual planning activities, the Office of Institutional Research continually searches for new ways to improve the book. This paper reports the findings of one such study in which AIR members from colleges and universities in the United States and Canada were asked to respond to a questionnaire concerning fact book production at their institutions. Of the 600 institutions surveyed, 311 usable responses were returned. Of these 311 responses, 145 reported that they produced some type of fact book and 95 returned copies of their fact books with the questionnaire.

Analysis of the data was done in two parts. The first part analyzed reasons for not producing a fact book. Primary reasons given were "lack of manpower" and "no perceived need."

In the second phase, analyses of the responses to questionnaires from those institutions which do produce fact books revealed that automatic distribution is generally directed to internal units at each institution, i.e., central administration, deans, chairpersons, and committees unique to each college or university. Virtually all these respondents indicated that fact books were distributed to any unit or person upon request. Uses of the information found in the fact books were reported to be primarily as a "resource document," "a reference source," and "for planning purposes." Major problems encountered in the production of the fact books appeared to be "a lack of funds for publication costs" and the "availability of printing facilities."

In the analyses of the fact book's content, a checklist consisting of 35 areas of information was developed. This checklist was then used as a guideline for summarizing the content of each fact book. The percentages of each type of information was then recorded for each institutional type. Results of this analysis indicated no apparent relationship between institutional type and type of information in the institution's fact book. The most common type of information found in the fact books for all types of institutions dealt with student and faculty data.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following are recommended for further study:

(1) A follow-up questionnaire should be sent to those institutions that do produce a fact book. This follow-up questionnaire should elicit more detailed information about each of the areas examined in this study. This additional information would provide the needed data to evaluate costs, manpower hours, and uses of their fact book. An analysis of content area by type book compared to the institutional uses would provide a more accurate evaluation of the role of the fact book in institutions of higher education.

(2) In addition, the checklist used in this study to summarize information appearing in the fact book should be sent to those institutions not returning a fact book. This could allow a more complete analysis of content areas appearing in fact books.

ATTACHMENT A

West Virginia University | MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA 26506

Office of the President

July 15, 1977

Dear Colleague:

We are currently surveying institutions of higher education to gather information concerning the production and use of statistical profiles or "Fact Books." We hope to analyze the content, distribution, costs, manpower needs and other aspects of college and university "Fact Books."

In order to accomplish the above, your cooperation in completing the enclosed questionnaire or forwarding it to the appropriate persons at your institution for completion would be appreciated.

Please try to return the completed questionnaire by August 15, 1977, and enclose a copy of your most recent "Fact Book " to:

Mary Ann McWhorter
Office of Institutional Research
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506
Phone: 304-293-4906

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Edwin R. Smith
Associate Provost for Planning

Enclosure

Please check type of institution by highest degree earned.
___Doctorate ___Master's ___Baccalaureate ___Associate

Does your institution periodically compile a statistical profile or "Fact Book" which is distributed internally and/or externally? Yes___ No___.

If No, Why:
___A. Lack of funds
___B. Lack of manpower
___C. No perceived need
___D. Information cannot be easily obtained
___E. Other (please specify)_____.

1. If Yes, number of copies produced per publication _____.

2. Approximate total cost of materials, printing, shipping, etc. incurred in producing the "Fact Book" _____(exclude manpower costs.)

3. Approximate manpower hours (hours of your office staff) utilized in producing the "Fact Book".
   A. Professional, Administrative _____.
   B. Clerical, Secretarial _____.

4. Of the following, which are <u>automatically</u> provided (upon publication) a copy of the "Fact Book"?
   ___A. Central Administration
   ___B. Deans
   ___C. Chairpersons
   ___D. Faculty
   ___E. Students
   ___F. State or Federal Agencies (underline)
   ___G. Private Agencies
   ___H. Other (please specify)_____.

5. Of the following, which are supplied copies only upon <u>request</u>?
   ___A. Central Administration
   ___B. Deans
   ___C. Chairpersons
   ___D. Faculty
   ___E. Students
   ___F. State or Federal Agencies (underline)
   ___G. Private Agencies
   ___H. Other (please specify)_____.

6. Briefly describe the predominant uses of the "Fact Book" that is published by your institution or what you perceive the uses to be by those who receive copies. (Use other side if necessary)

7. Please rank the following as problems encountered in producing the "Fact Book".
   1 = Most Difficult 5 = Least Difficult
   ___1. Problems incurred in availability of data
   ___2. Insufficient number of staff
   ___3. Lack of funds for publication costs
   ___4. Availability of printing facilities
   ___5. Problems in the reliability of data
   ___6. Other (please specify) _____.

Please enclose a copy of the latest publication of the "Fact Book", if applicable, produced by your institution with this form and send to:

Mary Ann McWhorter
Office of Institutional Research
200 Purinton House
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506

by August 15, 1977

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